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STATE FOR SA/INS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/12/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [CE](#)
SUBJECT: NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT LETTER TO SRI LANKA AND LTTE

Classified By: Ambassador Jeffrey J. Lunstead for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) After Co-Chairs meeting April 12 (septel), Norwegian Ambassador Brattskar grabbed Ambassador privately to pass copy of letter which Norwegian International Development Minister Erik Solheim was sending to Sri Lankan President Rajapaksa. Brattskar said very similar letter would be sent to LTTE. Brattskar emphasized that he was giving the letter only to the US as he wanted to avoid leaks to the press.

¶2. (C) Text of letter:

I thank you for our pleasant and fruitful meeting last week, and I take the opportunity to wish you a happy New Year.

When Norway was asked in 2000 by the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to take on the role as facilitator for the peace process in Sri Lanka, we agreed on the condition that our role would be to support two parties that both themselves wanted to take the long and difficult road towards peace. Norway itself has no power to bring about a peaceful solution to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. All we can do is to assist the parties if they themselves take responsibility for the process and are sufficiently willing to accept difficult compromises. The development the last few days is in this light deeply disturbing.

I am writing to you to express my concern about the fact that both parties are continually taking steps that are undermining the confidence of the other party, while expecting Norway to find solutions to problems that only the parties themselves can resolve.

When I visited Sri Lanka in January and during the talks in Geneva in February, the LTTE promised to refrain from violence towards the Sri Lankan armed forces, including the use of claymore mines. Meanwhile the Government of Sri Lanka promised to take the necessary steps to ensure that no armed groups are allowed to operate in or attack the LTTE from the Government controlled area. The parties have not kept these promises.

The parties make the peace process further difficult - also on minor issues - not being able to show the necessary degree of flexibility. Instead of considering steps for increasing confidence between the parties they demand the other party to make concessions.

I would also like to express, Your Excellency, my concern about the security of our Embassy personnel and that of the SLMM. Security is not just a question of taking security measures, but also of the climate that surrounds the facilitators and the monitoring mission. Norway's

involvement as facilitator is based on the expectation that the parties actively explain the facilitator's difficult task to the respective followers. We are, of course, fully willing to discuss the way we are carrying out our task. However, it is unacceptable for unreasonable criticisms of Norway to be allowed to stand unchallenged, or even to be put forward by key representatives of the parties.

Unless the parties are quick to seize the opportunities that have arisen both during my visit in January and in the positive outcome of the talks in February, there will be very little Norway can do to bring the peace process forward at this stage.

We have shown throughout the seven years Norway has been involved in the peace process that we are willing to stand by the parties in good times and bad. However, I hope you will forgive me for pointing out in this letter that the responsibility for creating peace in Sri Lanka lies with the parties themselves.

Please accept, Your Excellency, my assurance of the continued commitment of Norway and the facilitator team. We will remain at the full disposal of the parties in their courageous steps towards peace.

LUNSTEAD